

building, and these are utilized for dwellings and storage places according to the requirements and capacities of the tribes. The house is depressed beneath the surface of the ground, partly, perhaps, better to withstand the cold, and partly, no doubt, because of the lack of necessary timbers to build walls and span the space required above ground. The large winter houses are entered by a long underground passage, the low walls of which are constructed of whale bones, stones, or timbers, while the house has a framework of timbers or whale-ribs covered with earth. The ground-plan and interior arrangement are simple, but well perfected, and remarkably uniform over the vast extent of the Arctic shore line. The snow house is particularly a product of the N. Snow and ice, available for the greater part of the year, are utilized in the construction of dwelling unique on the face of the earth. These are built of blocks of compacted snow held in position, not by utilizing any of the ordinary principles of construction, but by permitting the blocks to crystalize by freezing into a solid dome of ice—so solid that the key block may be omitted for a window or for the passage of smoke without danger to the structure. This house lasts during the winter, and in the summer melts away. The summer houses are mere shelters of driftwood or bones covered with skins. There is no opportunity for esthetic display in such houses as these, and clever as the Eskimo are in their minor art work, it is not likely that esthetic effect in their buildings, interior or exterior, ever received serious consideration. The people do not lack in ability and industry, but the environment restricts constructive effort to the barest necessities of existence and effectually blocks the way to higher development. Their place in the culture ladder is by no means at the lowest rung, but it is far from the highest.

The houses of the N. W. coast derive their character largely from the vast forests of yellow cedar, which the enterprising people were strong enough to master and utilize. They are substantial and roomy structures, and indicate on the part of the builders decided ability in planning and remarkable enterprise in execution. They mark the